

TECHNIQUES FOR KEEPING UP WITH THE VETERINARY LITERATURE: PART 3

The previous two columns have looked at broad considerations for keeping up with literature and specifically following authors and articles. This time, let's look at journals and societies.

Journals

One of the advantages in keeping up with literature in the online era is being able to have tables of contents of journals delivered to you electronically in a timely manner. Tables of contents are not limited to the journals for which you have subscriptions. You're not limited by geography or specialty. Many journals post notifications about articles online as they're accepted instead of waiting until the entire issue is compiled and ready for release. If you're a subscriber, you also often receive early access. If you're not a subscriber, you can receive early notification.

Tools

Following journals using indexes with alerting functions, like PubMed, can be a simple and flexible solution. Decide which journals you would like to receive notifications about and determine which index they are in. To locate the list of journals covered in an index, consult the help file. Sometimes the list of indexes covering a journal can be found on the journal homepage in the "About the Journal" section. After you've chosen journals and an index, look in the index for a way to set up alerts. Let's use PubMed as an exam-



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ple because it is freely available. In PubMed, this is done using a free "My NCBI" account. Look up directions for a journal search, not a topic search, and search for your journal of interest. A journal search in PubMed uses a standard journal title abbreviation and a field tag denoting a search for the journal title. For example, "J Am Vet Med Assoc"[jour] searches for JAVMA. After you've completed a search for the journal, use the "Create Alert" just under the search box to save the search. As you work through the steps, the screens will guide you through whether you want an email alert, how frequently and how detailed you'd like it to be.

Following a journal directly from the publisher's website is another freely available option. Use your favorite search engine to locate the homepage for the journal. Then look for the alerting functions; these will be different for each publisher.

Many journals have a Twitter feed in which they announce individual articles as they are accepted in addition to new


issues and news of interest. This can be especially useful for specialty journals and association journals. Following a Twitter feed has the added advantage of leading you to additional Twitter feeds of interest.

Societies and Associations

The subject or geographical focus of societies and associations makes their publications fantastic resources. Regardless of whether you are a member, visit the group homepage to find information about their journals, guidelines and conference publications like proceedings. If you want to be alerted about newly released guidelines, try a service like Visualping (<http://visualping.io>), which notifies you when a webpage changes.

The Bottom Line

The online environment provides a variety of customizable paths for you to keep up with the specific literature that interests you. Spending a bit of time and thought to set up alerting methods can keep you up-to-date and ahead of the game.

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